

With rising home energy costs, a 50-percent cut in funding will jeopardize the LIHEAP program. October and November are especially busy months for the community action agencies that administer it. The program year begins October 1, and many agencies sign up the vast majority of LIHEAP participants right away. Most States get almost 90 percent of their annual allotment in the first quarter.

In 3 months, the loss to Massachusetts will be \$2 million. Half of the State's 4,000-person staff will face layoffs. Yet our State serves more than 400,000 persons, including many from the Gulf States.

According to Action Inc., a community action agency in Gloucester, MA, a temporary 50-percent cut in funds will result in the elimination of its housing and family legal services. Three hundred fifty very low-income local families who face housing problems will be at risk of homelessness.

The family law program will also be eliminated. Yet it helps 75 very low-income residents a year by providing legal assistance on issues such as divorce, custody, visitation and child support. Four hundred twenty-five families will not have the legal assistance that helps prevent evictions and solve critical family issues.

Action Inc. is only one example of the numerous agencies in Massachusetts and across the Nation facing layoffs and program cuts or even elimination because of the harsh cuts in continuing resolution.

It is wrong for the administration and the House of Representatives to shred America's safety net even further when so many Americans are already falling through it. We know how to mend it. All we lack is the will and the leadership to do it.

The community services block grant agencies have been fighting to alleviate poverty with great skill. It is time the Government stopped forcing them to do so against such heavy odds. The challenge is too critical for Americans to ignore any longer. We can no longer remain indifferent to the least of those among us.

Personal responsibility, community responsibility, government responsibility—they go hand in hand. When one of them breaks down, as it has now, we have to fix it. I am saddened by Congress's harsh treatment of those most in need. We should fully fund the community service block grant, not cut it in half.

It may be inconvenient for House Members to take a plane ride back to Washington to fix the problem they created, but it does not compare to the hardships millions of poor people face today and every day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the third reading and passage of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 68) was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third

time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 68) was passed.

Mr. COCHRAN. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. STEVENS. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006—Resumed

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, is the pending business the Defense appropriations bill?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is H.R. 2863, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2863) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1922

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alaska [Mr. STEVENS] proposes an amendment numbered 1922.

At the appropriate place in the bill insert the following:

SEC. . Notwithstanding Sec. 101 of H.J. Res. 68, the Community Services Block Grant program shall be funded at the same rate of operation as in Division F of Public Law 108-477, through November 18, 2005.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, this will ensure, once our Defense bill is passed, that this glitch in the community services block grants will be eliminated. I hope everyone understands that the sooner we get this bill to the President, the better off this program will be. In the meanwhile, this is assurance that the Senate stands behind the total figure that is in the Senate bill as reported out from the Senate today.

I ask for adoption of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate? If not, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 1922.

The amendment (No. 1922) was agreed to.

Mr. COCHRAN. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. STEVENS. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. I ask unanimous consent that Senator GRASSLEY and my

colleague, Senator MURKOWSKI, be added as cosponsors of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. STEVENS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, we have not been notified by any Senator that they wish to offer an amendment to the Defense bill today. It is my understanding later today there will be an agreement that all amendments in the first degree to this bill should be filed by 5 o'clock Monday.

Under the circumstances, since other Senators wish to speak on nongermane matters, unless there is someone who wants the floor right now to talk about defense—I am informed there may be an amendment.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, pending the arrival of the Senator who wishes to offer an amendment, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for the transaction of morning business in order that the Senator from North Dakota can speak for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. DORGAN and Mr. WYDEN pertaining to the introduction of S. 1805 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

STRATEGIC GASOLINE AND FUEL RESERVE ACT OF 2005

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as of yesterday afternoon, nearly a quarter of this country's refinery capacity is offline.

Already feeling the impact of high prices at the gas pump prior to the two hurricanes, Americans are bracing for additional price increases as refinery operations remain shutdown in the gulf coast. Americans are also bracing for record high energy costs this winter.

While the administration has ordered the release of petroleum from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, without refinery capacity, putting crude oil on the market does little to nothing to alleviate immediate supply constraints and high prices at pump.

What hurricanes Katrina and Rita taught is that we must be ready for a rainy day. That is why it is critical to our national and economic interests to build a gasoline reserve to keep the country moving forward in case of an emergency.